

**September—
October 2013**

Officers—2013

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A Stone's Throw

The Bozeman Gem and Mineral Club

Let's hear from our President, Kathy Hollenback

Hi everyone,

I have been very busy the last couple of weeks stripping and cleaning off wall-paper at my dad's house. Not really a good excuse for not getting the newsletter out sooner.

A group of us went to the Spencer, ID mine and a private mine for ice cream opal. I'll bring some specimens and others probably will too. The weather was very warm and we had a great time.

I want to thank Ken and Carol Zahn for sharing their home for our July picnic meeting.

Thanks.

Kathy Hollenback, Club President



Upcoming Area Shows

September 21-22, Hellgate Minerat Society, Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula, Montana, Sat 9-6 and Sun 10-5.

September 28-29, Billings Gem and Mineral Club, Billings Hotel and Convention Center, Sat 10-5 and Sun 10-4.

Our Website

The address for our website is:

<http://bozemangemandmineralclub.com/> Check out these websites also. www.the-vug.com/ and www.amfed.org/nfms/ you may need to copy and paste to your computer

Meeting Dates:

September 17, 2013

October 15, 2013

November 19, 2013
election of officers

December ??
Christmas Party—
location to be determined

January 15, 2014 —
the new year begins

Unofficial Minutes to the August Meeting 8/20/2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:14 by Kathy Hollenback.

Ken gave a presentation on basic formation of pegmatites that produce gem crystals.

Minutes were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report—Cheryl was gone so we didn't get more than our checking balance.

Correspondence included: Helena News letter. Pioneer Museum membership. The Bitterroot club sent our club a thank you card for being at their show. The Denver Gem and Mineral show is being held September 11th - 15th. A letter was received from the Federal government BLM. Kathy gave the letter to Ken.

We had a sign-up sheet for the tour at the Museum of the Rockies Monday, August 26th at 2:00pm.

Old Business

John C will get a call when the display case is done at the airport.

New Business

The trip to Spencer Idaho mine is a 2 day trip from Saturday, August 24rd to August 25th. Meet at 1:00pm on Saturday at the Spencer mine store for fire opal. It costs \$10 per pound of material. Wear glasses or goggles. No open toe shoes are allowed. Bring a water spray bottle. On Sunday it is a 20 -30 mile drive from the Spencer mine for ice cream opal. There is a \$40 fee for up to 10 lbs of material. People can stay at the Mountain View RV park and motel for \$53 a night. To make reservations call Connie at 406- 276-3535.

Ken will screen for sapphires at the El Dorado bar on August 30th or 31th. Ken will report the condition of the mine. Expect pale blue sapphires and fewer greens and yellows.

Someone contacted Ken about a property that was recently purchased and the owner is planning to renovate it. The property has rock faced planter boxes with rocks seated in cement. Someone can come out to break up the planters for the rocks. Ken will send an email with pictures to club members.

Ken attended 2 meetings at the Butte show. At the Montana Council meeting the council wants to upgrade 10 new cases for the Montana gem and mineral shows. They also need a president and requested John Usher to be the president. The American Lands Access Association meeting needed a speaker for CBU. Ken offered to speak. The ALAA also needs a lawyer. John Usher left some ALAA pamphlets for club members.

The Land Water Act Association actually wants to close roads and stop river access. They focus on gold dredging.

No committee reports

Ken mentioned there are members and nonmembers who have impressive rock collections. He suggested 4 volunteers to take club members to their homes to look at the collections. This may be a good trip for winter.

John Usher would like to take a trip to Whiskey Gulch. He asked if members can go on weekdays.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

Field trip Reports

Last month's 2-day trip to Spencer, Idaho, for fire opal and "ice cream" opal went well (and there was much-needed rain Saturday evening). Leslie Eddington, Larry Hildebrandt, Kathy Hollenback, June and Larry Neeley, Cheri and Jerold Surdahl, and Ken Zahn attended. Altogether, there were 7 on Saturday in Spencer for fire opal "digging" in the rock pile behind the well-known "Spencer Opal Mine" shop (with others from the Interstate-15 public) and 6 on Sunday for an exclusive Club dig at the "Hot Rocks-owned" ice cream opal mine site 35 miles west of Spencer. Rooms and food at Lima MT Saturday night were good. Most of us managed to get a pound of rock with some hint of an opal seam with color for our \$10 entrance fee after digging and trimming for ~ 3 1/2 warm hours on the rock-pile behind the well-known "Opal Mine" showroom building on Saturday. By contrast, the next morning at the "Hot Rocks" shop a block away in Spencer, while waiting to be lead on our drive to the ice cream opal mine dig by the owner, most of us found a pound of good fire-opal-seam-bearing material for about \$10 each *in about 10 minutes of sorting opal rock rough piled on the "opal-for-sale" table outside that shop!!* There's a "lessons-learned" message there, I think; there were outside tables of good Oregon obsidian and other material for sale there as well. On Sunday, the scenery on the trip to the ridge-top location of the ice cream opal mine was pretty spectacular, with 4x4 only needed near the top portion. A herd of bison crossed the road in front of us on the way up, and 2 moose were just off the road on the way down. Lots of material of "strawberry," "vanilla," or "chocolate" color was available for pick-up from the ground or by easy scraping in the dump piles. Among the several hard-core diggers who descended into the active mine trench-cuts, Larry Neeley struck a nice vein of pink-white opal material in the decayed trench-wall dirt right away and took out many pounds for June to sort through and grade near days-end. Ken was less successful in the same trench, but seemed to enjoy discussing politics, medicine, and "life" with Larry while trying to find the logical extension of Larry's opal seam. All-in-all, most got 10 pounds of reasonable material for the \$40 fee (i.e., \$4 a pound, and extra material for \$3 a pound above the first 10 pounds) after screening and sorting the product of their digging efforts before the long trip back to the Interstate and home. Ice cream opal also can be picked out and bought from the outdoor-table stock at the Spencer-located "Hot Rocks" shop for about \$8 a pound if you stop there in Spencer.

Bruce Thorne from SLC, Ken Z , and Leslie Eddington went later in the week (Sept 3rd) to Sweetwater Basin for garnet and rhyolite; had fun and got especially nice (and plentiful) small rhyolite pieces. They found, however, that there is NO WATER in upper Sweetwater Creek right now near the garnet diggings -- thus, no screening or concentration of screened gravel there.

John C arranged for a group of members to get a Museum of the Rockies Docent Tour. It was very interesting to see how the volunteers and staff work with and handle fossils. They are doing some fascinating research using the Montana fossils. It is very tedious work.

Field trips with friends Ken Zahn lead 3 friends (from the Salt-Lake-City-area clubs he used to belong to) on a quick short series of collecting stops at Sweetwater Creek (garnet and rhyolite), Alder dredge-piles (corundum), and El Dorado Bar (sapphire gravel fee-dig) on August 28-30. Two of the visitors were ONLY interested in looking for garnets at Ruby Reservoir shoreline and sapphires at El Dorado Bar, and had no interest in the Alder dredge piles or rhyolite rough, etc., as they "had plenty" and "had been there many times before." Rain and wind stopped any collecting at Ruby Reservoir shoreline, and they reluctantly agreed to humor Ken for suggesting trying to find nice corundum on the Alder dredge piles after the rain subsided. Of course, the biggest detractor of going there ended up finding a MONSTER palm-sized, heart-shaped, bright-pink corundum weighing about a pound (see photo below). The fee dig next day at Hauser Lake's El Dorado Bar north of Helena was less successful, with one finding only one pale blue sapphire in 3 buckets of screened gravel from digging near bedrock, and another found only 4 small, non-cutable sapphires in 4 buckets of screened bedrock material. Ken's 4 buckets and Bruce Throne's 2 1/2 buckets haven't been sorted yet, but prospects aren't great for better results. (Will reserve judgement until their's is sorted through.) On the way back to Salt Lake, however, 2 of the group stopped at the "Hot Rocks" shop in Spencer Idaho and had similar success in getting good fire-opal-seam rough from the stocks there (as our Club's members had a week earlier).

The Bozeman Gem and Mineral Club meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Belgrade Valley Bank building at 7:00 pm. The meeting room is downstairs. We have a program at the beginning, a social time with "show and tell", a silent auction of great mineral samples, and then our business meeting. We would like to start a Junior club if anyone has an interest or ideas to make this happen. We always encourage young people to attend meetings and rock outings. Our club membership dues are \$10.00 for an individual and \$20.00 for a family. They are due in October for the next year. Memberships are effective January to December. We need some basic information for memberships, so please include this with your check or cash: name, address, phone number, e-mail address, childrens' names, when applicable, and type of membership sought. We encourage e-mail addresses so we can send newsletters that way. Please check your e-mail and phone number on our membership list. Contact Linda Johnson if you find errors. Call 587-2117 or send changes to lindajohnson.montana@gmail.com

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A Stone's Throw

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Programs

Ken Zahn, our Program Chairperson, arranges for presentations at our meetings.

- Our own Richard Geer will present next Tuesday night's meeting 7PM program on the fine art of crafting his extremely high-quality cabochons. He will discuss key "do's and don'ts," and equipment options and costs, then demonstrate the techniques at an equipment setup. If you've seen Richard's work at our show's display cases, you know how well his work is received by the membership and by the public. Come to the meeting and learn how to produce beautiful finished pieces from the material we all collect and buy.



Rumor Mill ("True or False"):

- Pat and Gini Rogers from Hamilton, and Linda Johnson of Bozeman may be our Club's only representatives attending the Denver show Sept. 13-15.
- Jay Bernasek just bought a vintage Mustang car at auction from Jay Leno's famous collection,
- Jay was seen closeted with a local bank-loan officer going over loan application paperwork just a few days ago.
- Jay also has just set up a cabinet of very nice glass insulators for sale at the consignment antique store in Belgrade.
- Jerry Hancock found a 3-inch-long, ice-blue aquamarine at the Calvert tungsten mine dumps last week (went to see if the dumps were still "collectable").
- We may sign up a new member from Idaho Falls who enjoys our show so much that she brings her family each year to attend and to collect locally.
- A boater at Ruby Reservoir said a man showed him a large, clear garnet dug from near the upper shoreline of Ruby Reservoir several weeks ago.
- Larry Neeley (retired surgeon) is enrolled in German classes at MSU.



We're also on Facebook.
Bozeman Rock and Gem Club

Photos taken by Ken Zahn at Claim #1